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Letter dated 12 February 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 11 February 1997, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Osman Ertuğ, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 58, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hüseyin E. ÇELEM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Letter dated 11 February 1997 from Mr. Osman Ertuğ to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 28 January 1997 addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative at the United Nations in connection with the visit, to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, of three ships of the Turkish Navy between 25 and 29 January 1997 (A/51/786-S/1997/84).

I wish to state, at the outset, that one cannot help but wish that a new and more conciliatory attitude had been displayed by the Greek Cypriot side, as you assume your duties as the new Secretary-General of the United Nations, instead of the same tired arguments and recriminations which have come to characterize their approach to the Cyprus issue. It is indeed regrettable that the Greek Cypriot side has not only failed to adopt a more constructive attitude, but has stepped up its campaign of malice and propaganda, as evidenced by the successive letters addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative at the United Nations. This, in spite of the fact that the Greek Cypriot side stands guilty and widely condemned for having further inflamed the situation in the island by its recent purchase of sophisticated S-300 missiles from the Russian Federation and other militarization activity.

Having said that, I would like to return to the substance of the above-mentioned letter of the Greek Cypriot representative and to recall that similar representations which had been made by the Greek Cypriot administration regarding flights of Turkish aircraft within the airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus were rejected in toto in my successive communications to the Secretary-General, most recently in my letter dated 12 December 1996 (A/51/754-S/1996/1056). Since the present Greek Cypriot allegations on the so-called "violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic" are essentially of the same nature as the ones previously made, they do not merit a detailed reply. I wish to underline briefly, however, that the navigation of ships in the territorial waters of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and use of port facilities, take place with the full knowledge and consent and, in this particular case, upon the invitation, of the appropriate authorities of the State over which the usurper Greek Cypriot regime in the south has no jurisdiction or right of say whatsoever.

The visit to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus of ships from the Turkish Navy, namely, Fatih, Doğan and Gurbet, in the context of the special relations that exist between the two countries, is symbolic of Turkey's continuing commitment to the security and well-being of the Turkish Cypriot people. The Greek Cypriot protestations over the visit, therefore, are totally unwarranted and emanate from its unfounded claim to be the sole sovereign authority over the whole island, which is the real provocation and an impediment to a peaceful solution.

The present Greek Cypriot charges are undoubtedly designed to divert attention from the other side's provocative policy of escalation and tension in the island, particularly in the wake of the signing, on 4 January 1997, of an agreement to purchase the sophisticated S-300 missile system from the Russian Federation. With this purchase, the Greek Cypriot administration is clearly flouting the call made by the Security Council in its latest resolution on the Cyprus issue, namely resolution 1092 (1996) of 23 December 1996, not to introduce sophisticated weaponry into the military arsenal on the island. The Joint Declaration issued by the Presidents of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and Turkey, far from being a threat to anyone, is aimed at safeguarding against the grave threat posed to the stability of the island and the region at large by the excessive rearmament of the Greek Cypriot side and its recent purchase of sophisticated weaponry. Moreover, I should emphasize that, unlike the warships from Greece which participated in the hostile and provocative Nikiforos-96 military exercises in South Cyprus last year, the aforementioned visit was undertaken as a demonstration of the commitment of Turkey, as a guarantor Power under international treaties, to the security of the Turkish Cypriot people. While in port, the ships were opened to the civilian public, which took advantage of their presence.

The Greek Cypriot policy of escalation and tension and the accompanying barrage of allegations demonstrate in no uncertain terms that the Greek Cypriot side is far from coming to terms with the reality that Cyprus is the common home of the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot peoples which are of equal political status. Hence, the refusal of the Greek Cypriot leader, Mr. Clerides, to come to the negotiating table on the unconvincing excuse that there is no "common ground". It is worth noting that the Greek Cypriot side persists on its claim of "lack of common ground", in spite of the existing parameters, in order to buy time for the implementation of its so-called "Joint Defence Doctrine" with Greece and its unilateral bid to join the European Union without first resolving the Cyprus issue.

I call upon you and all those who are interested in a peaceful settlement of the Cyprus question to direct their efforts towards convincing the Greek Cypriot side to abandon its reckless policy of escalation and tension and to impress upon it the need to come to the negotiating table within the framework of your mission of good offices, in a new and more positive spirit.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 58, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Osman ERTUĞ
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus